

ward one of the tents. At this moment a pleasant-faced young officer came out of the tent, and, taking in the situation at a glance, addressed Pierre in French :

"Well, my boy," said he kindly, "what are you doing here so early?"

Pierre became polite at once, so surely does courtesy find courtesy.

"Sir," said he, taking off his hat, "I have come after my father's oxen, those beasts yonder, which strayed back here in the night. This was our home, yesterday."

Pierre's voice quivered as he spoke these last words.

The officer looked very much interested.

"Certainly," said he, "you shall have your oxen. We don't take anything that doesn't belong to us. But tell me, why is not this your home to-day? Why have you all burnt down your houses, and run away? We are the true friends of all the Acadians. What had you to fear?"

"We didn't do it!" replied the boy. "It was Monsieur the Abbé and his Indians; and they threatened to scalp us all if we didn't leave before you came!"

The young officer's face grew very stern at the mention of the Abbé, whom he knew to mean Le Loutre.

"Ah!" he muttered, "I see it all now! We might have expected as much from that snake! But tell me," he continued to Pierre, "what is going on over on the hill this morning? They are not going to attack us, are they? We are on English soil here. They know that!"

"I don't know," said Pierre, looking about him, and over at Beauséjour, "They *were* very busy, getting things ready for something, when I left. But I wanted my oxen, and I didn't wait to ask. May I take them away now, Monsieur?"

"Very well," answered the officer, and he offered Pierre a shilling. To his astonishment Pierre drew himself up, and wouldn't touch it. The young man still held it out to him, saying: "Why, it is only a little memento! See, it has a hole in it, and you can keep it to remember Captain Howe by. I have many friends among your people!"

"My heart is French," replied Pierre, with resolution. "I cannot take money from an enemy."

"But we English are *not* your enemies. We wish to do you good, to win your love. It is that wicked Le Loutre who is your enemy."

"Yes," assented Pierre, very heartily. "We all hate him. And many of us love

the English, and would be friends if we dared; but *I* do not love any but the Holy Saints and the French. I love France!" And the boy's voice rang with enthusiasm.

A slight shade of sadness passed over the young Captain's earnest face. Edward Howe was known throughout Acadie as a lover of the Acadians, and as one who had more than once stood between them and certain well deserved restraint. He was attracted by Pierre's intelligence of face and respectful fearlessness of demeanour, and he determined to give the young enthusiast something to think about.

"Do you not know," said he, "that your beloved France is at the back of all this misery?" And he pointed to the smoking ruins of the village.

"Do you not know that it is the gold of the French King that pays Le Loutre and his savages? Do you not know that while Louis instructs his agents in Quebec, and Louisbourg, and yonder at Beauséjour, to excite the Indians, and certain of your own people too, to all sorts of outrages against peaceful English settlers, he at the same time puts all the blame upon *your* people, and swears that he does his utmost to restrain you? Oh, you are sorely deceived, and some day you will open your eyes to it, but perhaps too late. My heart bleeds for your unhappy people."

The young man turned back into his tent, after a word to the sentry who had brought Pierre in. The boy stood a few moments in irresolution, wanting to speak again to the young officer, whose frank eyes and winning manner had made a deep impression upon him. But his faith in the France of his imagination was not daunted. Presently, speaking to his oxen in a tone of command, he drove the submissive brutes away across the marsh.

As he left the English camp a bugle sang out shrilly behind him, and a great stir arose in the lines. He glanced about him, and continued his way. Then he observed that the slope of Beauséjour were dark with battalions on the march, and he realized with a thrill that the lilies were advancing to give battle. In another moment, looking behind him he saw the scarlet lines of the English already under arms. And a signal gun boomed from the ships.

Trembling with excitement, and determined to carry a musket in the coming fray, Pierre urged his oxen into a gallop, and made a detour to get around the French army. By the time he got back